



The Snorkel Exhaust

SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASE, TN



UNITED STATES SUBMARINE SERVICE VETERANS, INC.
The USSVI Submariners Purpose and Creed:
 "To honor those who serve, past, present and future."

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments.
 We pledge loyalty and patriotism to the
United States of America and its Constitution.



OUR ORGANIZATION

OUR FOUNDERS

OUR BROTHERHOOD



Our Mission
 The organization will engage in various projects that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyles we enjoy today.

SNORKEL EXHAUST INDEX

FEBRUARY 2026

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Scheduled Meetings
 Base meetings are scheduled on the **3rd** **Thursday** of each month at:
MIMI'S CAFÉ,
10945 PARKSIDE DRIVE
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE
Dinner & Social Hour @ 1800
Meeting @ 1900
 (Guests are Invited)



Follow us on Facebook at:
 Smoky-Mountain-Submarine-Veterans-273222054302

SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASE OFFICERS



BASE COMMANDER
Marlin E. Helms, Jr.
 Holland Club Chairman



MM1(SS) USS Spadefish SSN-668 '74



BASE VICE COMMANDER
Robert (Bob) Childs



MMC(SS) USS Nautilus SSN-571 '67



BASE SECRETARY
Ernie Ball



MMC(SS) USS LaFayette (SSBN-616) '75



BASE TREASURER
Jim Rock



MM1(SS) USS Andrew Jackson SSBN-619 '76

Smoky Mountain Base Committee Chairmen



BASE CHIEF OF THE BOAT
Terry McBride



MMC(SS) USS Woodrow Wilson (SSBN-624) '93



BASE PROGRAMS
Andy Armbrust



MM1(SS) USS Hammerhead (SSN-663) '75



INTERIM STOREKEEPER
Dick Love



MM1(SS) USS Spadefish SSN-668 '74



MEMBERSHIP / RECRUITER
Marlin E. Helms, Jr.



MM1(SS) USS Spadefish SSN-668 '74



WEBMASTER
Marlin E. Helms, Jr.



MM1(SS) USS Spadefish SSN-668 '74



BASE NEWSLETTER
Max Gildner



ET1(SS) USS Tullibee (SSN-597) '71



BASE PHOTOGRAPHER
Bruce Eitzroth
 Associate Member

ET1(SU) USS Sculpin (SSN-590)



BASE CHAPLIN
David Pope, EAWS
 Associate Member

OMSUBGRU-9, FP DET. 2



SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASE, USSVI
Meetings, Greetings, Gatherings & Calendar

FEBRUARY - 2026

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Scheduled Meetings:

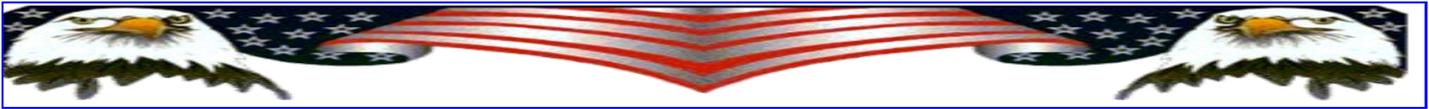
Base meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of each month at **MIMI'S CAFÉ, 10945 PARKSIDE DRIVE** located in **Turkey Creek, Knoxville, TN**



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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Smoky-Mountain-Submarine-Veterans/273222054302>

03/17—St. Patrick's Day 03/19 –SMB Meeting

MARCH 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



VETERANS ASSISTANCE & RESOURCES



Operation Vet Rescue

Rescuing & Rebuilding Lives of Homeless Veterans



(865) 284-3188

info@ovrtn.org

P.O. Box 23, Greenback, N 37742

VA Regional Office Benefits Assistance on every 4th Friday at 1557 Downtown West Blvd. Units 20-21 Knoxville, TN 0900-1400 Hours

East TN Military Assistance Council Calendar of Events web site: www.etmac.org/calendar

U.S. Military Veterans Discounts

Tennessee State Discounted Fees and Taxes

- \$10 one-time fee for hunting and fishing license for eligible disabled veterans.
- Distinctive motorcycle and vehicle license plates; no fee for currently enlisted personnel.
- Exemption from motor vehicle privilege tax for eligible permanently and totally disabled veteran or former POW.
- Reduced fee state park lodging, camping, and golf.
- Veterans Designation on drivers license.



(SS) CHALLENGE COINS LLC

www.SSChallengeCoins.com

31889 Marshall Rd
Jacksonville, Missouri
65260-2011
816.261.7784



Shelly Saxton

CEO/Owner

SubmarineCoins@gmail.com



In Service to America

The Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1078 meets at **The Redemption Church** located at **3550 Pleasant Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN** on the **2nd Tuesday** of



HONOR AND REMEMBER.

The Honor and Remember Flag has been designated as the official TN state symbol of remembrance to honor fallen military service members for their service.

For information on obtaining one refer to:
<http://www.honorandremember.org/the-flag/flag-presentation>.

**VETERAN'S
HOTLINE**

988#1

OR

(844) 647-1354

SUBVEST

Serving those
Who Already Have.

**The only place to get
CUSTOM SEWN**

**Submarine Vests, Hats,
Jackets, Shirts & MORE!**

**A Base Storekeepers Dream...
Discounts & No Stock to order
Call to set up an account!**

www.SUBVEST.com

Jenny Dugan - Sewing Wench
757-318-0138 B4 8pm





Base Commander's Report
Marlin E. Helms, Jr. - MM1(SS)



We are still in need of volunteers. The storekeeper position is still open and there is a need for a nominating committee and now there is a need for a picnic planner. Andy Armbrust's health may require a new coordinator for our picnics. It's a bit of a shame as Andy puts a lot of work into it with the smoked pulled pork each year. I hope all is well with all of you, the flu is making the rounds half my family including me have flu-B.



BASE VICE-COMMANDER'S REPORT

Robert (Bob) Childs, EMC(SS)



No report submitted.



SMB Treasurer's Report - Jim Rock MM1(SS)



On February 19th, we had a balance of **\$3,897.66**



Program Chairman's Report - Andy Armbrust MM1(SS)



No picnic is currently scheduled. I intend to plan a picnic for the spring of 2026 subject to the Yacht Club availability.



Newsletter Editor's Report
Max Gildner ET1(SS) & Bruce Eltzroth ET1(SU)



Please let us know if there are any suggestions for improvements to the newsletter form or contents. Photos of base activities are always appreciated.



Interim Storekeepers Report

Dick Love ETMC(SS)



We currently have the following items on hand for sale:

The 2026 USSVI Calendars have arrived.. Cost \$8.00 at the meeting, but if mailed postage will be added. Baseball caps w/SMB patch (White or Blue) - \$14.00. Straw Hat w/SMB patch - \$12.00. SMB Iron on Patches - \$7.00. SMB Logo Magnetic Car Plates - \$12.00. SMB Window Stickers - \$3.00. Smoky Mountain Base battery quartz wall Clocks - \$15.00. The "Nuke, I am your father" coins are here.—\$20.00.

Remember, all purchases go to support your Smoky Mountain Base



Smoky Mountain Base
of USSVI, Inc.
Meeting Minutes

Date: February 19, 2026

Presiding: Marlin Helms Base Commander

Meeting called to Order at 1902 hours

The Base Chaplain presented the Invocation.

The Base Commander led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and Secretary read the USSVI Creed.

COB and chaplain led the Tolling of the Boats.

COB hosted member/guest introductions.

Number of Attendees: 11 members, 5 guest/wife's

Base Secretary. Minutes read and approved

Base Treasurer reported - \$3897.66 in the account.

Correspondence/Discussion - None

Committees -

- Newsletter – Man Gildner- need officer inputs
- Library – Marlin Helms - new book
- Storekeeper – need a storekeeper
- Membership – stable
- Scouting – Marlin Helms- still no contact
- Media Manager – Marlin Helms- nothing new
- Social Committee - Andy Armbrust – need new volunteer Andy has cancer

Old business –

- none

New Business –

- Need Nominating Committee for elections
- Chaplain talked about VA changes
- Dick Love talked about Sub Advocacy working with Congress for changes

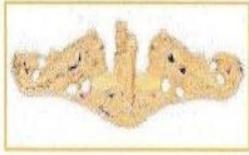
Good of the Order

- 50/50 - \$54.00

Next Meeting: 1900 hrs. Thursday, Mar 19, 2026, at **MiMi's Café, 10945 Parkside Dr., Knoxville, TN 37934.**

Meeting Adjourned at 1932 hrs. Boat surfaced.

Ernie Ball, Secretary



Lost Boats of February



USS Barbel (SS-316) - February 4, 1945



SS-316 Battle Stars

81 Men Lost



Lost on February 4, 1945, on her 4th war patrol. Based on Japanese records, she was bombed near the southern entrance to the Palawan Passage. The day before, she reported that she had survived 3 depth charge attacks. 10 officers and 71 enlisted personnel (a total of 81 men) were lost after Barbel sent a message reporting that she had been attacked three times by enemy aircraft dropping depth charges and would transmit further information on the following night. Barbel was never heard from again.

USS Shark I (SS-174) - February 11, 1942

SS-174 Battle Star

59 Men Lost



On February 2, 1942, the **SHARK** reported to her base at Surabaya that she had been depth-charged ten miles off Tifore Island and had failed to sink a Japanese ship during a torpedo attack. Five days later, she reported chasing an empty cargo ship headed northwest. On February 8, the **SHARK** was ordered to proceed to Makassar Strait via the north coast of Celebes. Thereafter, the **SHARK** was never heard from again. On March 7, 1942, she was reported as presumed lost due to unknown causes. The official announcement of the **SHARK'S** loss was made on March 18, 1942.

Japanese records reviewed after the war documented numerous attacks on unidentified submarines in the **SHARK'S** area at plausible times. On February 11, 1942, the Japanese depth-charged a submarine east of Manado, northern Celebes. On February 17, they attacked an unidentified submarine off Kendari. On February 21, an enemy sub chaser rammed a U. S. submarine in Manipa Strait (this report could not be confirmed). Based on the fact that on February 8 the **SHARK** had been sent to the area near Manado, she could have been the submarine the Japanese depth charged. Another report described an attack 120 miles east of Manado on February 11, 1942, at 0137 hours, by the IJN destroyer *Yamakaze*, which sank a surfaced submarine with deck gun fire.

ETERNAL



PATROL



Lost Boats of February



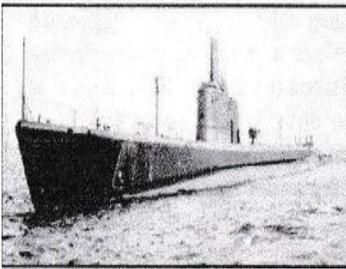
USS Amberjack (SS-219) - February 16, 1943

SS-219 Battle Stars

72 Men Lost



Lost on February 16, 1943, on her 3rd war patrol off Rabaul. She was attacked by a Japanese patrol plane, a torpedo boat and then depth charged by a subchaser. She reported having been forced down on the 13th by two destroyers, and that she had recovered an enemy aviator from the water and taken him prisoner. All further messages to the Amberjack remained unanswered. This engagement resulted in the loss of 6 officers and 54 enlisted men. One (or more) men were killed on the previous patrol. Japanese aircraft were very much aware of the **BARBEL'S** presence. In her February 3rd message she stated she had been attacked by aircraft with depth charges three times. She was never heard from again after sending that message. Japanese records made available after the war indicated a submarine was bombed and sunk on February 4, 1945, in the South China Sea at 7° 49' 5.000" N, 116° 47' 5.000" E. This position is off Balabac Island, about midway between Borneo and southwest Palawan, where the **BARBEL** was patrolling. The Japanese claimed one hit near the bridge with one of the two 250-kilo bombs dropped.



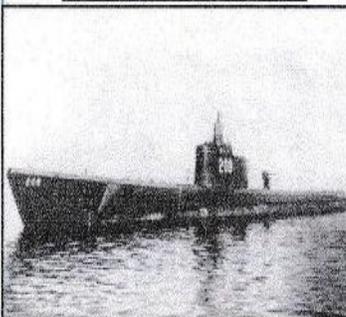
USS Grayback (SS-208) - February 26, 1944

SS-208 Battle Stars

80 Men Lost



Lost on February 26, 1944, on her 10th war patrol. The Grayback appears to to have been caught on the surface in the East China Sea by a Japanese carrier plane whose bombs made a direct hit resulting in the loss of 80 men. During this patrol, she sank 4 ships totaling 21,594 tons which resulted in a tie for 11th on the number of ships sunk. Japanese records reviewed after the war indicated that on February 27, 1944, the **GRAYBACK** torpedoed and sank the 4,905-ton cargo vessel *Ceylon Maru* at 31-35N, 127-47E. Sometime after this attack, the **GRAYBACK** was spotted surfaced by Nakajima B5N2 "Kates" of the Okinawa Naval Air Group. A direct hit was made on the submarine with a 250-kilo type bomb. The **GRAYBACK** exploded and sank immediately at 25-47N, 128-45E. Several Japanese antisubmarine vessels were summoned to the location and dropped depth charges over the spot where air bubbles were rising to the surface. Soon a lake of oil covered the surface measuring 100 meters wide and 250 meters long. If the **GRAYBACK** received ComSubPac's last message and headed home immediately, she would have been at the approximate position reported in the Japanese attack.





Lost Boats of February



USS Trout (SS-202) - February 29, 1944

SS-202 Battle Stars

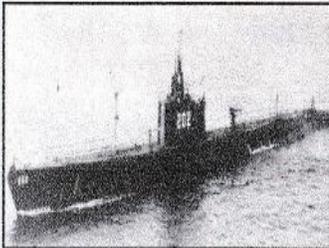


81 Men Lost

The **USS Trout (SS-202)**, under the command of **LCDR Frank W. Fenno, Jr.**, was patrolling off Midway Island when the war broke out on December 7, 1941. She returned to Pearl Harbor on December 20, 1941. This was considered her first "war patrol". She would make 10 more war patrols under 3 different skippers. Patrols 1-4 under **LCDR Fenno**, patrols 5-8 under the command of **LCDR Lawson "Red" Ramage** and patrols 9-11 under the command of **LCDR Albert H. Clark**. She was lost on or about February 29, 1944, southeast of Okinawa in the Philippine Sea with 81 men aboard. She carried out several notable special missions, including transporting over two tons of gold bullion out of Corregidor in February 1942. The USS Trout (SS-202) was awarded three Presidential Unit Citations, for her second, third, and fifth war patrols.

Patrol Data and Captains for the USS Trout (SS-202):

- 1- Patrolling Off Midway Island 07-Dec-41 to 20-Dec-41 **LCDR Frank W. Fenno, Jr.** returned to Pearl Harbor.
- 2- Transported ammo to Corregidor & embarked valuables to take to Pearl Harbor 12-Jan-42 to 03-Mar-42 **LCDR Frank W. Fenno, Jr.** returned to Pearl Harbor.
- 3- Off Honshu 24-Mar-42 to 17-May-42 **LCDR Frank W. Fenno, Jr.** returned to Pearl Harbor.
- 4- Off Midway 21-May-42 to 14-Jun-42 **LCDR Frank W. Fenno, Jr.** returned to Pearl Harbor.
- 5- Off Truk in Caroline Islands; ended at Brisbane 27-Aug-42 to 13-Oct-42 **LCDR Lawson P. Ramage**. Returned to Pearl Harbor.
- 6- Solomon Islands 26-Oct-42 to 23-Nov-42 Departed Pearl Harbor returned to Brisbane.
- 7- South China Sea; ended at Fremantle 29-Dec-42 to 23-Feb-43 **LCDR Lawson P. Ramage**. Departed Brisbane returned to Fremantle.
- 8- Laid mines off Borneo 22-Mar-43 to 03-May-43 **LCDR Lawson P. Ramage**. Departed Fremantle returned to Fremantle.
- 9- Spyron missions in Philippines 27-May-43 to 20-Jul-43 **LCDR Albert H. Clark** Departed Fremantle returned to Fremantle.
- 10- Surigao & San Bernardino Straits; ended at Pearl Harbor for overhaul 12-Aug-43 to 04-Oct-43 Departed Fremantle returned to Fremantle.



**U.S. Navy /
Marine
Presidential
Unit
Citation**

SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASE MEMBERS ON ETERNAL PATROL

Charles Redick - February 8, 2009

Richard Hughes - February 18, 2010

Bobby Anderson - February 24, 2020





GREAT LAKES SUBMARINES



During WW2, the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company located on Lake Michigan proposed to build ships for the US Navy. He presented a plan for transporting completed ships through the Chicago River, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, Illinois River, and Mississippi River to New Orleans. The Navy surveyed the yard and suggested they produce submarines, which they had never built before. They became a follow-on yard to Electric Boat depending on them for designs and drawings. They were awarded a contract for ten *Gato* Class submarines on September 9, 1940.

Their first submarine, USS *Peto* was launched sideways into the Manitowoc River on April 30, 1942, 228 days before contract delivery date. The *Peto* got underway for “sea trials” in Lake Michigan on November 5, 1942. Over five days of trials, the crew tested pumps, valves, hydraulic systems, steering gear, and plane operating mechanisms. The first dive was made from a stationary position. The dive went well with machinery working as expected. Running dives followed. The crucial 300-foot test dive was performed in the center of Lake Michigan off Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The trial board of ten Naval personnel made inspections and reviewed the results test results. *Peto* returned to port with a broom lashed onto the periscope having made clean sweep of all its tests.

Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company was awarded additional contracts for 4 additional *Gato* Class boats and 14 *Balao* Class boats. The *Balao* Class boats were similar to the *Gato* Class in overall shape, size, and performance except for the use of thicker, higher yield strength steel in the hull skins and frames. This gave the *Balao* Class boats a test depth of 400 feet.

The Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company completed all 28 contracted submarines by the target date for the last of the original 10 boat contract. The total cost for the 28 submarines came out to be \$5,190,681 less than the contracted price. Imagine being ahead of schedule and under budget today. Of the 28 Great Lakes boats, only four are on eternal patrol.

The *Gato* Class USS *Cobia* (SS-245) (NOT built by Manitowoc Shipbuilding) is on display at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, WI.





FEBRUARY 3RD - FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY

REMEMBRANCE OF THEIR ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

On February 3, 1943, the US Army Troop Transport Ship *Dorchester* was carrying 903 soldiers and crew from New York to Greenland. The shipping lane was heavily hunted by U-boats. In the early morning hours, the U-223 sighted the three-ship convoy off Newfoundland and fired a torpedo striking the *Dorchester* in the engine room. The strike took out the radio communications, knocked out the electrical power and caused the ship to quickly take on water. In the darkness, the troops and crew were panicking. On board were four newly commissioned Army Chaplains. They were of different faiths but came from many years of religious service. They worked in the darkness to calm the men, organize an orderly evacuation of those below, get men into lifeboats, and distribute life jackets. When the supply of life jackets ran out, they gave away their own life jackets so that others could have a chance of surviving. The Chaplains joined arms, said prayers in English, Hebrew and Latin and sang hymns as they went down with the ship.

The *Dorchester* sank in 27 minutes. The water temperature was 34 degrees F and air temperature was 36 degrees F. The convoy escort vessels, Coast Guard Cutters *Tampa*, *Escanaba*, and *Comanche* rescued only 230 of the 903 soldiers and crew. By the time other rescue vessels arrived on the scene, hundreds of bodies were seen floating on the water in lifejackets. Hypothermia claims most of the deaths like those of the *HMS Titanic*.

Who were these brave and selfless Chaplains?

- Methodist Minister Reverend George L. Fox, (42) ordained on June 10, 1934
- Reform Rabbi Alexander D. Goode (31) ordained in 1937
- Baptist Minister Reverend Clark V. Poling (32) ordained in 1936
- Catholic Priest John P. Washington (35) ordained on June 15, 1935

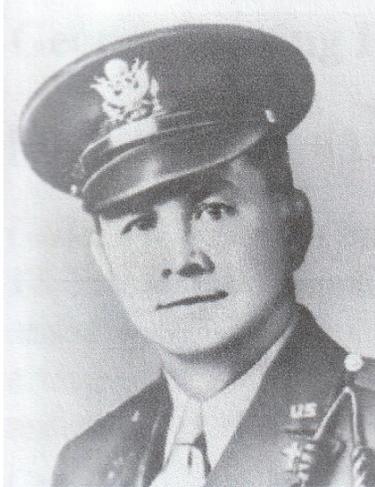
Their backgrounds, personalities, and denominations were different, although Goode, Poling and Washington had all served as leaders in the Boy Scouts of America. They became friends while attending the U.S. Army Chaplain School at Harvard University. The men were bunked together to promote tolerance and understanding.

In 1944, the four Chaplains were posthumously awarded the Purple Heart for their sacrifices and the second highest military honor, the Distinguished Service Cross. They were nominated for the Medal of Honor, but as they were not active in combat, it was denied.

In 1948, they were honored with a US Postal Commemorative Stamp which, by the rules of the time, usually was limited to past presidents after they had been dead for ten or more years.

To make up for their ineligibility for the Medal of Honor, Congress authorized on July 14, 1960 a one-time Special Medal for Chaplains' Heroism. The medal was intended to have the same significance or recognition as the Medal of Honor. The medal is also known as the Chaplain's Medal of Honor or the Chaplain's Medal for Heroism. The medals were presented posthumously to their next of kin by Secretary of the Army Wilber M. Brucker at Ft. Myers, VA on January 18, 1961.

On February 3, 1998, the US Senate established February 3rd as Four Chaplains Day to commemorate the 55th anniversary of their ultimate sacrifice.



George L. Fox



Alexander D. Goode



Clark V. Poling



John P. Washington

Four Chaplains' Medal





USSVI APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Regular Life Associate

OUR CREED: "To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America & its Constitution."

With my signature below I affirm that I subscribe to the Creed of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., and agree to abide by the Constitution, all Bylaws, Regulations and Procedures governing the U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc., so long as they do not conflict with my military or civil obligations. I will furnish proof of my eligibility for Regular membership, including my discharge under honorable conditions, and proof of my U.S. Navy (SS) Designation, if required by the Base or the national Membership Chairman. If I am not discharged, the discharge requirement is waived. If I am not U.S.N. submarine qualified, I am applying as an Associate member and my sponsor is indicated below.

- I certify that I was designated qualified in USN Submarines aboard _____ in _____ (Year)
(Honorary designations regardless of source do not apply under any circumstances.)
- I certify that I received a discharge under Honorable Conditions (if not currently in military service) in _____ (Year)

Name: (Print /Type) _____ **Address:** _____

City: _____ **State:** ____ **Zip Code:** _____ - _____ **Tel:** (____) _____ - _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Your E-Mail Address _____ **Base/Chapter Desired:** Smoky Mountain Base

Nat'l Member Dues year runs from Jan 1st thru Dec 31st. Please indicate your term preference: _____

Nat'l Dues: 5 Year term: \$ 140.00; 3 Year term: \$ 85.00; 1 year term (Jan thru Sep) \$ 30.00;

(Oct thru Dec adds the next year): \$ 35.00

National Life: 76+ yrs = \$120.00; 66 thru 75 yrs = \$240; 56 thru 65 yrs = \$ 360.00; 46 thru 55 = \$500.00; Thru 45 yrs = \$ 600.00

Smoky Mountain Base dues are \$ 15.00 (\$ 10.00 after Aug. 1st)

How did you find USSVI? Friend, Boat Assn, Local Event/News, Internet, Other (_____)

Who is your sponsoring USSVI Regular Member?: (Mandatory for Assoc Members.) _____

Associate Applicant is: Veteran Spouse of Veteran Other (specify) _____

YOUR U.S. NAVY BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Date Of Birth (MM/DD/YY) -- ____ / ____ / ____ **If other military service, What Branch?** _____

Highest Rate & Rank Attained: _____ **Mil Retired (Y/N):** ____ **On Active Duty? (Y/N):** ____

YR entered Mil Service: ____ **YR left Mil Service** ____ (Active/Inactive reserve time also counts.)

- Check if your Military Service falls within any of these time periods: Dec 7, 1941, thru Dec 31, 1946; June 27, 1950, thru Jan 31, 1955; Aug 5, 1964, thru May 7, 1975; and from August 2, 1990 to date.
- Check if you have been awarded an Expeditionary Medal.

Submarines and ships served aboard as ship's company (Use back if you need more space.)

1. _____ Hull# _____ Rank/Rate _____ From Yr. ____ to Yr. ____

2. _____ Hull# _____ Rank/Rate _____ From Yr. ____ to Yr. ____

3. _____ Hull# _____ Rank/Rate _____ From Yr. ____ to Yr. ____

4. _____ Hull# _____ Rank/Rate _____ From Yr. ____ to Yr. ____

5. _____ Hull# _____ Rank/Rate _____ From Yr. ____ to Yr. ____

Next of Kin: Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____ (Spouse, Partner, Son, Daughter, Parent, Other)

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** ____ **Zip:** _____ **Tel:** _____

(Leave this address line blank if the same as your home address)

home address.

Upon completion, please deliver to: Marlin Helms at the monthly meeting (on the third Thursday of each month) or, Applicants on active duty are requested to provide a permanent mail to:

Marlin Helms Smoky Mountain Base Commander, 732 Old Hen Valley Road Oliver Springs TN 37840 (865) 387-5625